

FARMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

POLICY AND PROCEDURE



Policy Number:
241-06

Effective Date:
02/09/2018

Subject:
Canines

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S.D. Hebbe".

Steven D. Hebbe, Chief of Police



PURPOSE:

To provide guidelines for the management of the Department's canine unit and use of police canines in field operations.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Farmington Police Department to utilize canines in adherence to procedures that properly control their use of force potential and that channel their specialized capabilities into legally acceptable crime prevention and control activities.

PROCEDURE:

Definitions:

Canine Team/Police Service Dog (PSD): A certified officer handler and assigned police canine who is certified in patrol and/or narcotics detection.

Canine Coordinator: An assigned officer given supervisory responsibility of the organization and coordination of the canine unit.

Canine Unit Utilization:

Canine teams are available on a 24-hour, on-call basis to conduct building searches for offenders in hiding, assist in the arrest or prevent the escape of serious or violent offenders, protect officers or others from death or serious injury, track suspects, locate lost or missing persons, hidden instrumentalities, or evidence of a crime, and to detect the presence of concealed narcotics. The foregoing list of circumstances whereby a canine team may be utilized is not intended to exclude other lawful purposes for which a canine team may be assigned or in which they can become engaged. The Canine Coordinator has the authority to determine the lawfulness and appropriateness of a proposed assignment or circumstance and can authorize, deny, or restrict the involvement of police canine teams in the event.

Canine handlers have individual authority to determine whether a situation justifies canine use (deployment) and the appropriate tactical measures that should be taken.

Police canines shall not be handled or given commands by anyone other than the assigned handler. Should the

assigned handler be injured or otherwise unable to command the canine, another canine handler shall be contacted for assistance, when available.

Unit Qualification:

Applicants for the police canine unit must complete their period of probation with satisfactory work performance. In addition, applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. A willingness to remain with the unit for at least three years; the only exception is a promotion;
2. A willingness (together with other family members) to care for and house the canine at the officer's residence with a secure outdoor area for the canine that conforms to Department requirements;
3. A strong desire to work with canines and a willingness to care for and train the animal;
4. Demonstrate physical fitness abilities related to the tasks of canine handling: lifting, carrying, climbing, and balancing while bearing the combined weight of the canine and any necessary associated equipment. Additionally, applicants should demonstrate overall fitness abilities consistent with the strength, endurance, and cardiopulmonary capacities required of newly certified officers.

Canine handlers will be selected through a competitive process in accordance with established Department procedures.

Unit Training:

New canine handlers must complete a prescribed canine training course and successfully meet all course requirements certifying them in their respected area of patrol operations and/or narcotics detection before they will be utilized for patrol operations. Canine handlers are required to train weekly whenever possible. Canine handlers create and maintain a log of training sessions. The Canine Coordinator verifies the use and completion of the training logs. Canine teams undergo quarterly evaluations and annual certification of the canine team's performance by an independent assessor. The independent assessor submits a written evaluation of the canine team which is entered into the canine team's training log. A copy of the independent written evaluation is maintained by the Canine Coordinator.

Requests for Law Enforcement Agency Assistance and Police Canine Demonstrations:

Police canine teams may be used to assist other law enforcement agencies if the request is approved by an on-duty supervisor. When the canine team is to be used for the tracking or apprehension of suspects, the on-duty supervisor assures that a second officer, appropriately armed, respond with the canine team to operate as an immediate cover officer. Preferably, that second officer should be an officer of the Farmington Police Department who is reasonably familiar with our police canine procedures.

The use of a cover officer will also be required for canine deployments in the city.

Police canines may be used for demonstration purposes when such demonstrations are the legitimate business of the Department and appropriate for the circumstances as approved by the Canine Coordinator.

Building or Area Searches for Suspects in Hiding:

A primary use of Departmental canines is for the locating of suspects in buildings or other areas. These searches are governed by the following:

1. The building or perimeter should be secured by patrol personnel whenever possible;
2. A responsible party for the structure or area should be contacted and their presence should be requested at the scene whenever the responsible party is readily available;
3. When a building or area search by a canine team is anticipated, a preliminary search by officers will not be conducted, as this may interfere with the canine's ability to locate the suspect(s);
4. If, prior to beginning or during a building or area search, it is discovered that tenants, employees, legitimate occupants, or inebriates are in the building or area of search, the canine shall be leashed and the canine handler may continue the search on leash or utilize personnel to continue the search until such time that any reasonably known lawful occupants have been located and removed;
5. The handler maintains discretion as to whether the search is leashed or unleashed, depending on conditions at the scene and the severity of the crime;
6. Before commencing the search, the handler, or other appropriate personnel, shall loudly announce and repeat the statement that there are police officers on the premises and that a police canine will be released if the individual does not surrender, unless such an announcement would be tactically unsafe or undesirable to officers, the public, or the canine. A reasonable amount of time shall be allowed for the suspect to respond. This warning should be repeated on each level of all multi-level structures;

Crowd Control:

Canine teams shall not be used for crowd control at peaceful demonstrations.

Canine teams may be used for crowd control to protect life or property during a riot or other unauthorized gathering. In these situations, the canine shall:

1. Be leashed at all times, unless no other means are available to protect an individual from serious injury;
2. Not initiate any offensive action, unless to guard against the imminent loss of life or serious bodily injury;

Drug Detection:

Use of police canines in a drug detection capacity is authorized in the following situations and under the following conditions:

1. Only police canines certified in the detection of concealed drugs may be used in a drug detection capacity;
2. The canine handler shall maintain training records and annual certifications that document the use and the proficiency of individual canines in drug detection. The Canine Coordinator maintains and reviews copies of all annual certifications related to drug detection and a copy of the certifications will be maintained in the canine office;

3. Random exploratory sniffing of luggage, packages or other inanimate objects may be conducted in public facilities such as airports, and bus terminals;
4. Field officers may detain specific checked luggage or related items for the purposes of requesting a canine sniff when reasonable suspicion exists that items contain drug related contraband, but may not detain the items so long as to interfere with the owner's travel. When a canine alerts to luggage or related items, in this or other circumstances, a warrant or consent to search must be obtained before the item is opened, unless exigent circumstances exist to conduct an immediate search;
5. The use of drug detection canines in public schools is permitted only when:
 - a. The school principal or designated authority requests or approves the use of police canines;
 - b. There is reasonable suspicion to believe that illegal substances are being distributed and/or consumed on the premises such that the interests of the school are being unacceptably compromised;
 - c. The search is limited to inanimate objects in public areas and the exterior of student lockers and their vehicles when parked on school property unless, for the purposes of law enforcement prosecution, a warrant is obtained, or Probable Cause *and* exigent circumstances exist prior to gaining access to the item or area to be searched. Authorized representatives of the school may, according to governing case law and the policies of the school, choose to take personal action under their own authority regarding such a search when not acting as an agent of law enforcement personnel;
 - d. The search has been approved by the canine coordinator.
6. Drug detecting canines may be used to sniff motor vehicles when:
 - a. Reasonable suspicion exists to believe the operator or passengers are in possession of illegal controlled substances or related contraband;
 - b. During a valid vehicle stop, the canine may be used to sniff the vehicle's exterior in an exploratory manner. Unless the canine alerts to the vehicle, the operator may not be detained longer than necessary to conclude the business associated with the initial stop;
 - c. Interior searches of motor vehicles may be conducted if the owner or other person exercising authority over the vehicle gives written or verbal consent to search, if a search warrant is obtained, or, if probable cause exists and exigent circumstances are present;

Tracking:

Police canines are available to track missing persons or suspects, or to locate evidence that has been abandoned or hidden in a specified open area. Such searches are subject to the following conditions and limitations:

1. When officers are pursuing suspects and contact with the suspect is lost, the officer, prior to summoning a canine team should:
 - a. Stop and pinpoint the location where the suspect was last seen;

- b. Shut off engines of vehicles in the area if possible;
 - c. Avoid vehicle or foot movement in the area where the suspect or subject was last seen.
2. Canines used for tracking persons or locating lost children should remain on a leash of sufficient length to provide a reasonable measure of safety to the subject of the search, or other un-involved persons, without compromising the canine's tracking abilities;

Canine Use and Care:

Police canines shall not be used for breeding, participation in shows, field trials, exhibitions or other demonstrations, or for off-duty employment unless authorized.

Canine handlers are personally responsible for the daily care and feeding of their animal, to include:

1. Daily maintenance and cleaning of the kennel and yard area where the canine is housed.
2. The kennel will be secured and inaccessible to the public when the canine is left there unattended;
3. Provisions for food, water and general diet maintenance;
4. Grooming as often as required by weather, working conditions, or other factors;
5. General medical attention and maintenance of health care records. The Canine Coordinator maintains a copy of the health care records;
6. The handler will be responsible for ensuring that the canine receives veterinary services. This will be done in the event of injury or illness as well as recommended check-ups and vaccinations. The handler will make the determination as to whether the canine is fit for duty during time of illness or injury pending a recommendation of the canine's fitness for duty by a veterinarian;
7. The canine police vehicle will be maintained and serviced by the assigned handler. When the canine is left unattended in the vehicle, it will remain locked. The handler will be responsible for maintaining a comfortable environment for the canine when it is left in the vehicle with due consideration given to the temperature of the canine's environment.
8. The canine police vehicle will be equipped with the necessary equipment to safely house and control the canine, such as leashes, collars, correction devices and a watering bowl. This equipment is subject to inspection for availability and maintenance by the Canine Coordinator.
9. Prior to an officer being selected as a canine handler, it is preferred that the officer resides at a personally owned residence. However if the officer resides in a "rental property" residence, the officer shall have written permission from the homeowner that allows the officer to have a canine and provide living quarters for a police canine on the property. Rental property shall be such that will accommodate a kennel and include flooring which shall be constructed of a material that will securely contain the canine. All residences will be inspected prior to an officer being selected as a canine handler to ensure the property is capable of accommodating a canine and kennel by the Canine Coordinator.

10. Residences that house a police canine will have “caution” signs identifying that a dog is on the property and the signs will be placed at the exterior entrance gate and on the secured kennel gate. When a canine handler is not present at his/her residence, the police canine will be kept in the secured kennel supplied by the department.

Behavioral Difficulties:

Any behavioral difficulties with a canine shall be brought to the attention of the Canine Coordinator through the process of inter-office memorandum, as soon as practical. The Canine Coordinator will forward the information through their chain of command, up to the Chief of Police. Together, the decision will be made to require the affected canine team to attend additional training, or replacement and/or the retirement of the canine from active service if it is deemed the canine’s behavioral issues are beyond corrective measures.

Retirement Determination:

The recommendation to retire a canine from police service will be documented in an inter-office memorandum by the canine handler to the Canine Coordinator. The Canine Coordinator will forward this memorandum through their chain of command to the Chief of Police. An assessment of the canine’s fitness for duty will be conducted by the canine handler and canine coordinator, and may include a medical assessment of the canine by its regular veterinarian. The assessment may include, but is not limited to the canine’s age, health, medical conditions, daily performance, training and/or other contributing factors. If the assessment determines the canine to be unfit for continued duty, the canine coordinator shall submit an inter-office memorandum, through their chain of command, to the Chief of Police or his designee who will make the final determination.

Upon determination of a canine’s retirement, documentation shall be generated in the form of inter-office memorandum indicating the relinquishment of the canine to the canine handler, advisement of compensation from the Department for routine veterinary health checks and dog food upon condition the handler remains employed with the Farmington Police Department. In the case where the canine handler retires, separates or is terminated from the Department, compensation for the canine’s care will be terminated at such time. With regard to major health or medical conditions post retirement, which may need addressed through veterinary treatment or surgery, such medical actions and associated costs will be the decision and sole responsibility of the canine handler should he or she elect for such a procedure to be performed.

Compensation:

1. A K-9 handler's normal workday will consist of 9.5 hours of normal duty time, and 30 minutes of maintenance time for a total of 10 hours per day- 4 days a week. The salaried stipend and 2 hours per week of maintenance time referenced above is to compensate for the "at home care" of the police service dog.
2. When submitting requests for vacation or other time off, a K-9 handler's request should reflect the normal duty time of 9.5 hours per day, and 38 hours per week since there is no lapse of need for continued maintenance of the police service dog.
3. K-9 handlers are eligible for overtime after their normal duty time is complete.

When the handler is unable to perform these and related duties due to illness, injury, or leave:

1. Another canine handler may be assigned to temporarily care for the dog, or;

2. The canine may be housed in a kennel, approved by the Department while the handler is unavailable.

Teasing, agitating or rough-housing with a police canine is strictly prohibited unless performed as part of a training exercise.

Handlers shall not permit anyone to approach, pet, hug, or otherwise have contact with their canine without their permission and close, direct supervision. If the handler permits contact of their canine from a civilian, the handler shall control all aspects of the civilian's approach. If a canine is permitted to engage closely with small children, outside the canine handler's family, the canine will be muzzled to prevent any unnecessary and/or accidental bite.

Accidental Canine Bites, Injuries and/or Damages:

Whenever a canine accidentally bites a handler in a training situation, the handler should receive medical attention, if necessary. The incident shall be documented in accordance with City of Farmington policy and procedures with regard to work related injuries and the canine coordinator notified within a reasonable time period;

The Canine Coordinator is responsible for documenting and submitting the Supervisor's Notice of Accident Report and related Workman's Compensation Notice in the event of an accidental bite or injury to a canine handler.